

Feb 1901.

L'UMILE PIANTA.

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THE JUST BALANCE.

AMONG the best results that Life, or any course of mental training, yields we may reckon the power "of holding things in their proportion," of dismissing quickly from our minds things trivial and passing, or, on the other hand, of giving careful consideration and study to some subject in order that we may realize its essential worth and meaning.

Some people have by nature minds not easily moved in any direction, and we call them "placid." Placidity is not, perhaps, one of the more fashionable complaints of the day, nor does its comparative rarity make it particularly valuable in our eyes. There is something so unspeakably dull about the person who never gets ruffled, never sees sufficient reason to join hotly in any of the wild rejoicings to which we have lately grown accustomed, nor ever descends to such depths of wretchedness as others reach.

There is, however, the acquired mental attitude which has outwardly some resemblance to placidity, but does, in fact, spring from an entirely different source. The one is rather like the steady-going punt, which can scarcely be upset, the other like the highly-evolutionized "eight," kept in working position by the nicest adjustment of very lively forces.

Placidity generally implies a kind of mental sluggishness, whereas a well-balanced mind is alert and quickly set working, yielding us increase of power, not more by directing our emotions and mental forces than by storing them till needed.

We are each obliged to move in an appointed circle—our groove, as we say—and one groove at a time, and generally for a long time, is as much as most of us can manage. Week in, week out, we do much the same work and see chiefly the same people; the household in which we live becomes the principal corner of the whole earth to us, and, unconsciously it may be, we individually form the centre of it, and look at all passing events first as they affect ourselves.

x J. Barker Esq.
Alexandra Lodge